



# NORWAY

**General Assembly**  
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**High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.**

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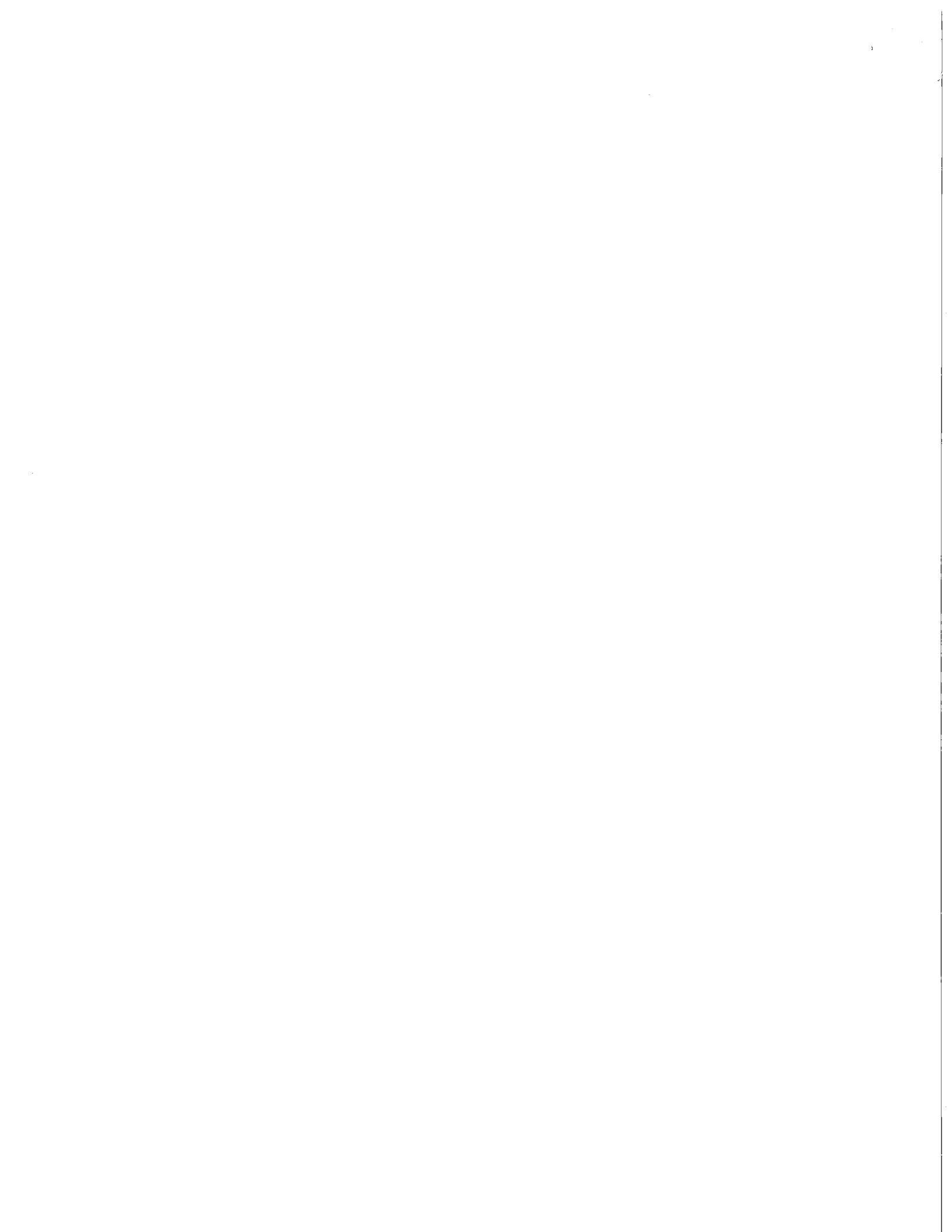
**STATEMENT**

**By**

**H.E. Mr. Erik Solheim**  
**Minister of International Development**

**New York, 14 September 2006**

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Madame President,

Norway welcomes this opportunity to share ideas and experiences on how to combine migration processes and development efforts.

The report of the Global Commission on International Migration, as well as the report from the Secretary General have contributed to our understanding of the forces at work, and introduced ideas and opportunities for the management of migration and development.

Norway also welcomes increased interstate cooperation at the global level, and the proposal for a forum open to governmental, non-governmental and private sector stakeholders

Madame President,

- My teacher in high school said “the story of the Norwegian people is a story of poverty”. Migration lifted many of us out of poverty. Today the growth in Norway is partly ensured by the migrants coming to work and to live in our country. This is my point of departure for the High Level Dialogue.
- I am fortunate to represent a privileged country and a strong welfare state. Even so, I know that the evil of human trafficking is growing in urban areas also in Norway. Unemployment among immigrants is higher than the national average. Let me underline that news from the shores of Southern Europe and the borders of North America deeply concern also the Norwegian society.
- The main challenge today is to deal with the fact that the contrast in living conditions, actual opportunities and the realization of rights and opportunities between countries of destination and countries of origin are greater than ever before in history.
- To promote stability and growth, we believe that social as well as economic effects of international migration must be addressed. The High Level Dialog and its follow-up must address the tricky balance between regulation and incentives, between national and international regimes.
- The fundamental challenges and concerns are the same for all countries – although in different ways: What must be done to ensure rights-based and sustainable development, providing fair distribution and real opportunities for all, both for nationals and immigrants, to get a decent job and a chance to make a living?

- Norway has to contribute to the challenges raised by accelerating migration flows.
- We are facing policy areas filled with complexities, conflicts of interest and contradictions. Let us not be paralyzed. Let us channel our energy to the common interests of all of us so we can harvest the dividend of human mobility.
- Norway's bottom line in regard to development policies is the improvement of political and economic conditions in countries of origin. To promote stability and growth, we believe that social as well as economic effects of international migration must be addressed. We will ensure a comprehensive rights-based approach to development, including in relation to international migration, based on Human Rights instruments and ILO Conventions.
- We will incorporate a gender sensitive approach in all policies and programs.
- We will highlight the rights of the child and focus on the protection of migrant children and youth in countries of destination, transit and receiving countries as well.
- We will contribute to the development of balanced immigration policies that allows circulation of human resources. There are unwanted implications of restricting labour movements while allowing free movements of goods and capital. Where there is a need for labour, the migrants filling this need must benefit from a corresponding legal status.
- The Norwegian government will build on the competence represented by migrants and migrant organisations involved in development cooperation. Realizing that other donor- and receiving countries may have established procedures and models that may be replicated, we will seek alliances and partnerships among them.
- Norway will have a dialogue with financial institutions both in our country and in the countries of origin, and encourage them to reduce the transaction costs of remittances. We must cooperate with the international community to make advancements in this area.

Madame President,

Let me sum up,

- Norway is committed to the redistribution of wealth on global, regional and national level. Many of the social and human challenges connected to migration can be countered through establishment and implementation of international and regional standards.
- The pressure that challenges decent international standards may seem overwhelming, but the “race to the bottom” must be avoided or everybody will loose in the long term.
- A common vision shared by the private sector, the civil society and governments is necessary to this end.
- Norway therefore fully supports the Secretary General’s proposal to establish an informal, consultative forum, driven by and open to all the 192 member states of the United Nations.
- We believe such a Global Forum on International Migration and Development, under the auspices of the United Nations, should also be open to participation by representatives from civil society and the private sector. It should include and work closely together with the Global Migration Group and its members.

